Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

A 280.39
M34Am
CORE LIST

KEYS TO QUALITY

Food Buying Guides from USDA

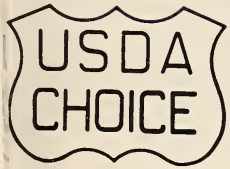
U.S. DEPT OF AGRICULTURE
NATL AGRIC. LIBRARY
JAN 4 '74
PROCUREMENT SECTION

U.S. GRADES—GUIDES TO QUALITY

U.S. grades on food mean the same thing in all parts of the country, in any season, in any store, day in and day out. These grades are based on nationally uniform Federal standards. Their use is supervised by qualified Government graders. They offer you a reliable guide to quality and a means to compare quality with price.

You won't find U.S. grades on all foods, since their use is voluntary. Processors or packers who want their product to carry the U.S. grade name or the shield-shaped USDA grade mark must contract and pay for official grading services. Many foods that are actually graded by USDA do not carry the grade mark.

There are several grades for each food product, but here are the ones most commonly seen.



MEAT

This mark on the outer fat covering identifies meat that has been graded. It means that the quality of the meat has been judged by an expert and impartial Federal grader. Beef and lamb are the meats most commonly graded. Calf and veal are graded, too, but in smaller amounts. This grade (USDA Choice) is the one preferred by most consumers; in general it denotes a high degree of tenderness, juiciness, and flavor. In the Choice grade, these beef cuts may be cooked satisfactorily by dry heat (broiling or roasting): tenderloin, porterhouse, T-bone, club, sirloin, and rib steaks, rib and rump roasts, blade chucks.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

Slightly Revised
July 1973
AMS-542

*M*S 542 slightly rev. 8p. JULY 1973.

POULTRY

This grade shield may be found on packages of fresh or frozen poultry—chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas. Poultry of lower grades seldom is identified with a grademark. *Class* of poultry is important, too; look for the word "young" (or broiler, fryer) if you want to broil or roast the bird. Grade A birds will have a better meat yield and appearance than those of lower grades.

EGGS

For eggs, the grade shield appears on the carton or on a sealing tape. Higher grades (U.S. Grade AA and A) are best for poaching and frying. The size of egg is also shown (Extra Large, Large, Medium, Small); but size has no bearing on quality. More than a 7-cent price spread between different sizes of the same grade usually means the smaller eggs are the better buy.

PROCESSED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (AND RELATED PRODUCTS)

This shield or the grade name alone identifies top quality in frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables, and a few other products such as peanut butter, jelly, jam. It also means strict sanitation control in the processing plant. About 40 percent of the canned and 80 percent of frozen fruits and vegetables are officially graded, but the grade is not always shown on consumer packages. In general, Grade A and B are desirable for table use. Lower grades are suited for use in stews, casseroles, puddings. They may consist of irregular pieces, be less tender than Grades A and B.

FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The U.S. grade name on a package of fresh fruits or vegetables means the produce meets certain standards for color, size, shape, and freedom from defects. If the grade name is enclosed in the official shield—as shown here—the

produce has been packed under continuous USDA inspection, which means both quality control and plant sanitation have been strictly supervised. U.S. No. 1 is good quality and the grade seen most often. Some products, like apples, have premium grades such as U.S. Fancy.

BUTTER, CHEDDAR CHEESE

Graded butter is available in most markets. Grades AA and A will have a highly pleasing, sweet flavor. Only a small amount of cheddar cheese is now being graded for consumer sales. The grade on cheese designates desirable and consistent flavor, body, and texture that are appropriate for the type (sharp, mellow, mild). Instant nonfat dry milk may earn the "U.S. Extra Grade" shield that shows it was processed under sanitary conditions and that it meets high USDA quality standards.

TIPS ON BUYING FOOD

Read the label. Ingredients, when shown, are listed in order of quantity. Compare costs of the same product of different weights; large sizes often—not always—cost less per ounce. Packing mediums differ—fruits may be in heavy, medium, or light sirups; fish may be packed in oil or water. Natural cheese and process cheese may look alike; labels will identify which is which. A label marked "juice" will be just that; a "juice drink" may have added water, flavorings.

Compare prices of fresh, canned, and packaged foods. You will see which ones give the most servings for the least money. Some convenience foods (like frozen orange juice, canned tomatoes) are often cheaper to use than less highly processed ones. But you usually have to pay more for the "maid-service" done for you. Frozen orange juice concentrate is one of the biggest bargains in convenience foods—only about half the cost per serving of juice prepared at home from fresh oranges.

Watch for products in plentiful supply. USDA informs the public monthly, through newspapers, radio and television, of products in greatest supply. These are often offered at attractive prices. You should also consider buying fruits and vegetables that are in season in nearby production areas. Both quality and price should be better then.

Buy only what you need. Even if you can buy large quantities at reduced price, you won't save any money if much of it goes to waste. Buy no more than you can use at one time or can store in your refrigerator or freezer. And if you get a "bargain" in a side or quarter of beef, make sure your family will eat all the hamburger and stewmeat you'll get in addition to the steaks and roasts.

Keep a lookout for deterioration. Even with the most modern handling methods, some produce declines rapidly in quality while on display. Frequently such off-quality fruits and vegetables can be bought at a reduced price, but the waste in preparation may offset the price reduction.

Learn to shop intelligently. There is no substitute for your own experience in choosing the right quality product for your family. USDA's "How to Buy" booklets, however, can serve as useful guides to achieving satisfaction and economy in your shopping.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The following USDA booklets, available from the Consumer Product Information Coordinating Center, give more detailed food-buying information. Use the order blank on the back page and mail directly to: Consumer Products Information, Public Documents Distribution Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

How to Buy Fresh Fruits.

1967. 24 pp. 0100-0803. 15 cents.

Describes some 30 fresh fruits, what to look for in buying, what to avoid. Where produced, when in season.

How to Buy Fresh Vegetables.

1967. 24 pp. 0100-0805. 15 cents.

Gives information on more than 40 vegetables, how to select good quality, what to avoid, varieties, where produced, when they're in season.

How to Buy Eggs.

1968. 8 pp. leaflet. 0100-0806. 10 cents.

Information on USDA grades, sizes, price comparison. Tips on care, storage, and cooking.

How to Buy Beef Steaks.

1968. 16 pp. 0100-0807. 10 cents.

Illustrates and describes 16 beef steak cuts, gives degree of tenderness for each, explains USDA grades, suggests amounts to buy, how to cook. Chart of cuts.

How to Buy Beef Roasts.

1968. 24 pp. 0100-0808. 10 cents.

Illustrates and describes 10 beef roast cuts, USDA grades for beef, how much to buy, suggested cooking methods. Chart of cuts.

How to Buy Poultry.

1968. 8 pp. leaflet. 0100-0816. 10 cents.

What the USDA grades mean, age classifications, what to look for on the label. Tips on buying, cooking, storing.

How to Buy Meat for Your Freezer.

1969. 28 pp. 0100-0824. 20 cents.

Points you need to consider, such as how much to buy, quality, dealer reputation. How to compare costs of sides, quarters, wholesale cuts, and retail cuts. What USDA grades mean.

How to Buy Canned and Frozen Vegetables.

1969. 24 pp. 0100-0825. 30 cents.

What the grades mean, styles of vegetables, uses of different styles and grades. Chart of servings by can and package size. Full-color centerfold illustrates differences between grades.

How to Buy Dry Beans, Peas, and Lentils.

1970. 12 pp. 0100-1242. 25 cents.

Provides tips on buying, storing, and using these convenient protein foods. A full-color centerfold illustrates superior grade for selected beans, peas, and lentils.

How to Buy Canned and Frozen Fruits.

1971. 24 pp. 0100-1434. 30 cents.

What the grades mean, tips on containers and storage, how to read the label. Chart of uses by grade and style. Full-color centerfold illustrates differences between grades.

How to Buy Cheese.

1971. 24 pp. 0100-1441. 20 cents.

Encyclopedic listing of 28 types of cheese, showing flavor, place of origin, color and texture, and shapes. How to read a label, USDA grades for cheese. Identification chart.

How to Buy Lamb.

1971. 16 pp. 0100-1457. 15 cents.

Illustrates and describes 13 popular lamb cuts. USDA grades for lamb, how much to buy, suggested cooking methods. Chart of cuts.

How to Buy Potatoes.

1972. 12 pp. 0100-2432. 15 cents.

Describes types of potatoes by use, what the U.S. grades mean, and illustrates size ranges of potatoes labeled by size.

How to Buy Dairy Products.

1972. 16 pp. 0100-2595. 15 cents.

Defines various dairy products; includes tips on buying, using, and caring for them. Explains USDA quality grades for cheese and butter.

ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

The order blank on the back page lists these publications by stock number and price. Supplies of all publications listed are limited and prices are subject to change without advance notice.

Please note that checks or money orders are to be made payable to Superintendent of Documents, and *not* to the U.S. Department of Agriculture or Consumer Product Information.

The Superintendent of Documents provides a discount of 25 percent on purchases of 100 or more of a single publication to be mailed to one address.

ON OTHER PRODUCTS

The Consumer Product Information Center publishes a free catalog, "Consumer Product Information Index," listing publications available on all types of consumer information. To obtain copies of the catalog, just write in the quantity you wish on the order blank.

ORDER BLANK

TO ORDER: Indicate quantity and total price beside each publication desired. Fill in Mailing Label below (it will be used to return your order). Detach Order Blank page, enclose remittance (check or money order payable to Superintendent of Documents—please do not send stamps), and return to:

Consumer Product Information
Public Documents Distribution Center
Pueblo, Colorado 81009

Enclosed is $ _____ for the publications I have indicated.

STOCK NO.	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL PRICE
0100-0803	15¢	_____	_____
0100-0805	15¢	_____	_____
0100-0806	10¢	_____	_____
0100-0807	10¢	_____	_____
0100-0808	10¢	_____	_____
0100-0816	10¢	_____	_____
0100-0824	20¢	_____	_____
0100-0825	30¢	_____	_____
0100-1242	25¢	_____	_____
0100-1434	30¢	_____	_____
0100-1441	20¢	_____	_____
0100-1457	15¢	_____	_____
0100-2432	15¢	_____	_____
0100-2595	15¢	_____	_____
Consumer Product Information Index	FREE	_____	
		TOTAL:	_____

CONSUMER PRODUCT INFORMATION
PUBLIC DOCUMENTS
DISTRIBUTION CENTER
PUEBLO, COLORADO 81009

Postage and Fees Paid
U.S. Government Printing Office
375
Special Fourth-Class Rate
Book

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

NAME FIRST LAST

STREET ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE